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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Monthly Report -- London Bureau

FROM:

Chief, Operations Group

EXTENSION

NO

DATE

October 1988

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

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EDITIONS

2 November 1988
FBIS-4434-88

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group
FROM : Chief, London Bureau, FBIS
SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- October 1988

I. GENERAL

1. BBC Monitoring issued a new modernization timetable in October. Future milestones of interest to FBIS include the changeover to computerized operations and the Listening Room move to the new annex in mid-June 1989; the 11-meter Ku-band dish becoming operational in July 1989; the BBC management move to the first floor and the beginning of the FBIS area renovation including roof reconstruction, in Spring 1992, and finally the PMU transfer to the refurbished second floor in Autumn 1992. A copy of the timetable has been pouched to Headquarters.
2. One milestone of the BBC modernization timetable was realized on 17 October when the first 11-meter C-band dish at Crowsley Park became operational. The main mission of the dish will be Soviet TV (Orbita 4) and Mayak from the 53E Gorizont as well as some Tripoli and, on a trial basis, Saudi and Algerian TV. The 10-meter Caversham dish will revert to its traditional role as a research dish plus backstop for Pressfax and ad hoc major event coverage.
3. BBC plans to place all cruising and dish control functions with the engineers has been delayed by 6 months while [] the new Manager, Operations Services, undertakes a detailed analysis of operations at Caversham and Crowsley Park, in consultation with [] aimed at deciding how the operational services section will function under the new organization.
4. The fiscal year got off to an inauspicious start with the dollar dropping almost 10 cents in value to an ROE of \$1.76 to the pound by month's end. This negative development, compounded by high inflation and interest rates, will require very careful tracking of the budget. In this context, figures published in October showed UK wage inflation accelerated in August to an annual rate of 9.25 percent, the highest rate of increase since June 1982. These figures take into account bonuses and overtime as well as basic wages.
5. TDY'ers and former bureau staffers who have dined in the BBC Canteen will be pleased to learn that Catering Manager [] has received an award from the Reading Borough Council for consistently high standards over the past 12 months.

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II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. Effective 21 October, PMU began scheduling a senior media analyst on the Pressfax shift Friday through Sunday to assist the Pressfax editor in scanning the incoming papers and providing limited translation capability for urgent material. In another move to assist the PMU editors with the heavy workload, Senior Media Analyst [] has assumed acting editorial responsibility for all non-Russian press material, plus responsibility for ad hoc UK TV monitoring. Part-time employee [] will assist in processing selected UK TV programming. STAT
2. Editorial and PMU wordage for October was not only at an all-time daily average high for the month, but total wordage this month was the second highest in the history of the bureau. Events contributing to the high wordage included the troubles in Algeria, numerous meetings in Yugoslavia in the wake of rising Serbian demands, government shakeups in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and extensive Soviet reportage on party and government meetings on various perestroika-related issues. STAT
3. PMU had a marathon workload the weekend of 21-23 October when it processed the 12-take draft USSR law on amendments and additions to the Constitution and the 19-take draft USSR Law on Elections of USSR People's Deputies, for which it received a "well-done" from the acting Wire chief. The same weekend it also processed a 5-take Soviet-Brazilian communique at the behest of BBC, eight takes of Soviet press interviews with FRG leader Kohl, the CPSU Central Committee slogans for the GOSR anniversary, and a 12-take Soviet press version of a Gorbachev DER SPIEGEL interview. With no relief in sight, the Russian team in the following week processed the 12,000-word January-September Soviet economic performance report card and worked extended hours to provide consumers with the Maslyukov plan and Gostev Soviet budget reports to the Supreme Soviet on the same day they were delivered.
4. Bureau spirits were lifted early in the month by words of praise from Chief, Operations Group for the "excellent" coverage of the CPSU Plenum and Supreme Soviet Sessions involving numerous personnel changes. The bureau also received messages of thanks from Chief, Analysis Group and the acting Wire chief for its voluminous reportage on Yugoslav events.
5. With the demise of the "Briefs" format, the bureau began filing periodic editorial reports compiling numerous ambassadorial appointments.

B. Coverage

1. BBC arranged for extra staffing during the month to provide live coverage of demonstrations and special meetings in Balkan states related to demands for greater self-determination.
2. BBC covered satellite transmissions of Algiers Television for most of the month in the wake of the demonstrations leading to a state of emergency. During the height of the demonstrations, the bureau provided the Headquarters TV Center with live feeds of Algerian TV newscasts.
3. Effective 3 October, the bureau and BBC assumed coverage of the 1600 GMT Tehran TV newscast fed live daily from Nicosia Bureau. BBC has also agreed to fund feeds of the Tehran TV version of the Friday prayer sermons as required.
4. BBC discontinued feeds to Nicosia of the 2130 GMT Yereven International Service newscast effective 17 October when BBC reached agreement with a retired Armenian monitor who will process this material at home and deliver it to the BBC for use by both organizations.
5. As a follow-up to the African bureau chiefs' meeting, BBC's EAU and bureau assumed primary coverage of SUNA English and Arabic from Jordan Bureau effective 10 October. This arrangement formalizes what, in effect, had become a practical reality and will cut down the exchange of daily coordination messages. Effective 21 October, EAU agreed to backstop Jordan Bureau coverage of Sanaa Domestic Service and Voice of Palestine owing to reception problems at Jordan. Other BBC-London backstop efforts included Okinawa's USSR coverage during the 6-7 October typhoon emergency and overnight relays of Soviet TV to headquarters via Internet 5 to 9 October to allow the TV Center to use the TVRO for coverage of Chile in the lead-up to the plebiscite.
6. The bureau lost reception of the 3SAT satellite service which it monitored for live Internet relays of the ZDF evening newscast on 18 October when this service changed transponders. As a replacement, the bureau has begun feeds of the RTL Plus "Actuelle" monitored from the 13E Eutelsat.
7. PMU on 4 October was able to resume the last of its coverage turned over to Production Group as a result of the UK postal strike.

C. Lateral Services

1. At the urgent request of the U.S. Ambassador to Belgium, the bureau refiled to Brussels the text of a speech delivered by Soviet leader Gorbachev at a Moscow dinner for visiting Italian Premier De Mita. On the 26th the bureau

responded to a priority request from the Kabul embassy asking for confirmation and clarification of portions of a speech by Afghan leader Najibullah.

2. PMU filed an interview with Haiti's new military leader Prosper Avril from the 4 October issue of Paris LIBERATION at the request of the U.S. Embassy in Haiti.

D. Communications

1. All equipment is now in place in the Communications Unit for the IDD communications backstop. The system will become operational as soon as operator training is completed.
2. The Nicosia-Caversham dedicated circuit was activated on 30 October when Nicosia suffered a downtime on its primary circuit. By the end of the month, London had relayed 328 items to Nicosia and protected 158 Nicosia-originated items.

E. Technical

1. The main effort during the month centered around the AFP digital modification. FED engineer [] and two Delta contractors converted the AFP for digital transmission, but circuit and hard disk problems forced them to give up the project on the 27th. The bureau will continue to send Pressfax over Internet in analog format until the circuit problems are resolved and the contractors return to complete the digital modification.
2. Other technical projects during the month included the installation of new workbenches in the Engineering office to create additional space and the compilation of a full computer inventory and allocation list for all bureau computers.

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III. ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

1. Editor [] the last of the 1988 PCS'ers, arrived on 11 October. Senior editors [] departed PCS on the 3d.
2. Part-time courier/clerk [] entered on duty 23 October. She will be tasked with providing filing assistance for bureau management, keeping bureau reference material up-to-date, assisting with processing of UK voice material, and performing courier and mail duties as required.
3. The bureau forwarded the new FBN wagescale to RAMC after receiving final approval to implement from Headquarters. The increase will appear in the 3 November paychecks in time for

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Christmas shopping.

4. FBIS'ers who have served at London Bureau in the distant past will be saddened to hear of the death of former BBC HRD [] on 13 October and that of [] who worked at Caversham on the BBC Six Continents Program, on 13 October.

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IV. VISITS

To the bureau: Vienna Bureau Chief [] 1-4 October for talks with Bureau and BBC management; Deputy Chief, Operations [] 6-19 October on management trip; FED Engineer [] and 2 Delta contractors 19-27 October for AFP digital conversion; Headquarters Administrative officer [] on 24 October for bureau tour, administrative discussions and pub lunch; [] and Colonel James Purdon, NSC, for bureau tour and briefing.

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From the bureau: Bureau Chief, accompanying Chief, Vienna Bureau, to Croughton on 4 October for communications discussions; Bureau Chief, accompanying Deputy Chief, Operations Group, to Madley on 17 October for Internet briefing, discussions with BTI; Senior editor [] to Frankfurt 10-15 October for Management and Supervision course; Administrative Officer [] to Frankfurt 25-28 October for Administrative Support Conference.

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From the BBC: BBC Monitoring Organizer [] to Vienna and Nicosia Bureaus 12-16 October; BBCM Chief Engineer [] to FBIS Headquarters 16-22 October for discussions with FBIS management.

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Attachments

cc: Chief, Austria Bureau
Chief, Islamabad Unit
Chief, Okinawa Bureau